

May 27
1920

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

[ESTABLISHED 1840].

"And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches" (REV. 2: 28, 29).

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Thursday, May 27, 1920.

Price One Penny.

THE MILLENNIAL STAR.

THE British mission was opened by the coming from Kirtland, Ohio, then headquarters of the Church, of Apostles Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde. They were accompanied by Willard Richards, Joseph Fielding, John Goodson, Isaac Russell, and John Snyder. They landed at Liverpool on Thursday, July 20th, 1837, and put up in Union Street for two nights, proceeding on Saturday to Preston, where they were kindly received and invited to preach, in the Vauxhall chapel, by a brother of Elder Fielding who was the minister. Elder Kimball delivered the first discourse spoken in this mission, on Sunday, July 23rd, 1837, in which he says: "I declared that an angel had visited the Earth, and committed the everlasting gospel to man: called attention to the first principles of the gospel; and gave a brief history of the nature of the work which the Lord had commenced on the Earth. After which Elder Hyde bore testimony to the same."

In the evening another meeting was held, when Elder Goodson preached, and Joseph Fielding bore testimony. On the following Wednesday night another meeting was held, and Apostle Hyde preached, and Willard Richards added his testimony. The chapel was filled at these meetings to overflowing, and many were "pricked in their hearts," being convinced of the truth, "and began to praise God and rejoice exceedingly." This was the beginning, and on the following Sunday morning Elder Kimball baptized nine in the river Ribble. These were the first converts baptized in a foreign land.

The work spread with great rapidity. The elders separated, some going to Bedford, others to Cumberland. Many converts were made and branches organized. At Christmas a special conference was held at Preston, and over three hundred of the new saints attended, and over one hundred little children were blessed on that day. By the time Elders Kimball and Hyde were released

to return to America, April, 1838, there had been over one thousand five hundred baptized, and about twenty branches organized, mostly in Lancashire.

Elders Richards and Fielding were left in charge of the work, which proceeded with constantly increasing numbers and expansion of the field for two years, mostly by local elders. Elder William Clayton opened up the Manchester branch. In January, 1840, Apostles John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff arrived in Liverpool. Elder Taylor labored in Liverpool, and soon had a thriving branch of forty. Elder Woodruff went first to the potteries, in Staffordshire, and thence to Herefordshire, where within a few weeks he baptized several hundred, including over forty preachers of the United Brethren.

They were followed to England in April by Apostles Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, George A. Smith, and Elder Reuben Hedlock. Upon the arrival of these brethren a three days' council was held at Preston, April 14-16, 1840, and Elder Willard Richards was ordained an apostle. There were then eight of the Quorum of the Twelve present, and business pertaining to the mission was taken up with great energy. There was then a reported membership in England and Scotland of 1,671 souls, including 132 holding the priesthood. At this council it was determined that a monthly periodical should be published, to be known as "The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star," with Parley P. Pratt as its editor; and a committee of three: Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and John Taylor was chosen to make a selection of hymns for the use of the saints.

The elders were then assigned to their respective districts, with instructions to solicit subscriptions for the forthcoming periodical, and a conference was called to be held in Preston in the following July. Elder Parley P. Pratt was sent to Manchester, to begin preparations for the publication of the *Star*. This was congenial work for him, and with the counsel and advice of Elders Young and Taylor he soon had all arrangements completed, and was able to issue the first number in the latter part of May. The size of the page, weight of paper and general make up, chosen at the beginning, was the same as has been continued, and as it now appears. It was issued first as a monthly of twenty-four pages.

The heading, in almost the same type as now used, was as follows: "The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star, Edited by Parley P. Pratt, No. 1, May 1840, Vol. I. Price 6d."

This was followed by the following:

PROSPECTUS.

THE long night of darkness is now far spent—the truth revived in its primitive simplicity and purity, like the day-star of the horizon, lights up the dawn of that effulgent morn when the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. It has pleased the Almighty to send

an HOLY ANGEL, to restore the fulness of the gospel with all its attendant blessings, to bring together his wandering sheep into one fold, to restore to them "the faith which was once delivered to the saints," and to send his servants in these last days, with a special message to all the nations of the earth, in order to prepare all who will hearken for the Second Advent of Messiah, which is now near at hand.

By this means, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (being first organized in 1830) has spread throughout many parts of America and Europe; and has caused many tens of thousands to rejoice above measure, while they are enabled to walk in the light of truth.

And feeling very desirous that others should be made partakers of the same blessings, by being made acquainted with the same truths, they have thought proper to order the publication of a Periodical devoted entirely to the great work of the spread of truth, sincerely praying that man may be led to carefully examine the subject, and to discern between truth and error, and act accordingly.

The MILLENNIAL STAR will stand aloof from the common political and commercial news of the day. Its columns will be devoted to the spread of the fulness of the gospel—the restoration of the ancient principles of Christianity—the gathering of Israel—the rolling forth of the kingdom of God among the nations—the signs of the times—the fulfilment of prophecy—recording the judgments of God as they befall the nations, whether signs in the heavens or in the earth "blood, fire, or vapour of smoke"—in short, whatever is shown forth indicative of the coming of the "Son of Man," and the ushering in of his universal reign on the earth. It will also contain letters from numerous elders who are abroad, preaching the word both in America and Europe, containing news of their success in ministering the blessings of the glorious gospel.

As an Ancient Record has lately been discovered in America, unfolding the history of that continent and its inhabitants, as far back as its first peopling after the flood, and containing much historical, prophetic, and doctrinal knowledge, which is of the utmost importance to the present age, we shall give such extracts from time to time as will be most interesting to the lovers of truth.

From this source we shall be able to pour a flood of light upon the world on subjects before concealed—upon the history of a nation whose remnants have long since dwindled to insignificance in midnight darkness, and whose former greatness was lost in oblivion, or only known by the remains of cities, palaces, temples, aqueducts, monuments, towers, fortifications, unintelligible inscriptions, sepulchres and bones.

The slumber of ages has now been broken. The dark curtain of the past has been rolled up. The veil of obscurity has been removed, as it regards the world called new.—This discovery will yet be hailed among all nations as among the most glorious events of latter times, and as one of the principal means of overwhelming the earth with knowledge.

This paper also will contain extracts from some remarkable visions and revelations which have been given to the saints in this age, unfolding the mysteries of the kingdom of God from days of old and for ages to come; for truly some of the wonders of eternity have been opened to our view, and things to come have been shewn to us, even the things of many generations.

Following the prospectus came the

EDITOR'S ADDRESS TO HIS PATRONS.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-TRAVELERS TO ETERNITY,

It is with heartfelt joy and satisfaction we have the pleasure of sending forth the first number of the MILLENNIAL STAR—that luminary, which, rightly conducted, may be a means in the hand of God, of breaking the slumber and silence of midnight darkness, which, like a gloomy cloud, has long hung over the moral horizon—of dispelling the mists of error and superstition which have darkened the understanding and benumbed and blunted every great and noble faculty of the soul—and of kindling a spark of light in the hearts of thousands, which will at length blaze forth, and light up the dawn of that bright day which was seen afar off by holy men of old—the Sabbath of Creation.

We trust this paper will prove a welcome visitor to the palaces of the noble, the mansions of the rich, the towers of the brave, and the cottages of the poor; that the sublimity of its truths, the splendor of its light, and the easy simplicity of its style and language, may, at once, interest and edify the learned, and instruct and enlighten those in the humbler walks of life.

We are aware of the greatness of the undertaking, and of the solemn and awful responsibility resting upon us in conducting such a publication, as well as of the boundless field—the shoreless ocean—the fathomless deep upon which we have entered. We are truly sensible of our own weakness and inability to fill so important a station—to do justice to subjects so glorious and sublime, to themes so delightful so divine: themes which have exhausted the eloquence of ancient prophets—the melody of inspired poets: themes of which angels have tuned their sweetest notes—their sublimest effusions, in strains divinely new, the fulness yet untold.

Sensible of our own inability, we shall carefully give heed to the sure word of prophecy as to a light which shines in a dark place, and seek for the inspiration of that Spirit which guides into all truth, and, which searches all things; yea, the deep things of God. In so doing, we hope to be able to hold forth the truth in a light so clear and evident, that it will commend itself to every man's conscience.

In our principles, we shall be obliged to come in contact with many of the opinions, doctrines, and traditions of men; and have to contend with many prejudices which now exist in the world, growing out of the present and past unhappy state of religious society. But we shall pursue a straightforward, bold, and fearless course, without turning a hair's breadth to the right or left from the principles of truth, to court a smile or shun a frown. We shall not be careful to inquire what will be popular or unpopular—what will please or displease, but, what is truth; and when we discern that a principle is true, and will benefit mankind, we shall publish it, even if it were to come in contact with the opinions of all Christendom.

If, at any time, we shall be under the necessity of answering objections, correcting misrepresentations, or of entering into the field of controversy with those who may differ from us, we shall “contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints:” but at the same time, hold sacred the characters, regard the rights, and respect the feelings of

those who do not see with us. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle—patient towards all men." "In meekness instructing those who oppose themselves."

In matters of doctrine, we shall contend for *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* Holy Spirit, *one* God and Father of all; and in short, for all the offices, ordinances, gifts, and blessings which were set in order among the ancient saints.

As to party names, we shall acknowledge no name as belonging to the people of God but that of Saints; a name which is older than the flood. In relation to the Church of God in this age of the world, we shall acknowledge no name but "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

In regard to prophecy, we shall contend for a literal application and fulfilment, according to the common usage of the language—according to the most plain, easy, and simple meaning of words and sentences.

As to "Calvinism," "Arminianism," "Trinitarianism," "Unitarianism," "Total-Depravity," and a thousand other such-like terms, which have confused, distracted, and divided the religious world, we know of no such terms in the Bible, and therefore have nothing to do with them.

As to "the powers that be," we shall teach men to fear God, honor and respect the *laws*, and all who are in authority, until he (Christ) reigns, whose right it is to reign.

As to Temperance, we shall earnestly plead for men to be temperate in all things; and especially to beware of drunkenness and all its attendant evils and abominations.

In our style, we shall endeavor to be plain and simple, as our principles are designed for the benefit of all classes of society. In short, we hope, by the aid and assistance of the Spirit of God, to comfort the mourner—to bind up the broken-hearted—to preach the gospel to the poor—to bring glad tidings to the meek; and "that those who have erred in spirit may come to understanding, and those who have murmured may learn doctrine."

Manchester, May, 1840.

The contents of the first number consisted of the beginning of a continued article entitled, "The Millennium," "Revelations," being mostly extracts from the Doctrine and Covenants. "Church of England," "Restoration of the Jews," "Persecution of the Jews" (From the *Sun*). "At a General Conference," being a report of the conference held at Preston in April, "Temperance," by the editor, "Latter-day Saints in America," which describes some of the settlements, including Keokuk, Montrose, and Nauvoo; "To the Editor of the Millennium Star," a letter from Willard Richards; followed by four poems or hymns, titles and first lines respectively: "Invitation: When time shall be no more; Baptism: Repent ye Gentiles all; Morning Hymn: Wak'd from my bed of slumber sweet; Second Advent: Come, O thou King of kings." The number concludes with "Conference Notice," announcing the change of the July conference from Preston to Manchester, as being more central and because the publishing office was there; and the imprint, "Manchester: Printed by W. R. Thomas, Spring Gardens."

(TO BE CONTINUED).

MINUTES OF THE NOTTINGHAM CONFERENCE.

THE Nottingham semi-annual conference convened Sunday, May 16th, 1920, in the Corn Exchange, Nottingham.

Sunday-school session: Prayer, Brother Samuel Pears. Sacrament was administered by Brothers Bertram J. Coombes and William Henry Mullinger.

President Virgil B. Stallings welcomed all present.

The children from the several branches rendered their exercises in a very able manner.

President Smith addressed the congregation, and expressed his pleasure with the program by the children. Spoke of the birth of the Savior, and his ministry upon the earth, and touched upon the restoration of the gospel through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Elder Thomas M. Wheeler complimented the children on the way they had rendered their exercises.

Benediction, Frank Wheatley.

Afternoon session: Prayer, George Bradley. The Leicester choir rendered an anthem, "Oh come let us sing unto the Lord." The authorities of the Church were sustained.

Elder Alexander M. Graham was honorably released from his labors as a missionary.

Brother Harold Orme played a violin solo.

Elder Graham spoke, expressing his gratitude for the kindness that had been shown him while laboring in the Nottingham conference.

Elder Wheeler spoke of the elders laboring in the mission field as husbandmen, and commented on the parable of the sower. Sister Leah Hulley sang a solo.

President Smith occupied the remainder of the time. He spoke of a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith, referring to the calamities which were to come upon the people. Said there would be no lasting peace upon the earth until the Lord came.

Benediction, George William Thompson.

Evening session: Prayer by Brother Arthur Hall.

Elder Wheeler spoke of how essential it is to obey the laws of God in order to gain entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Showed that the heavens are not sealed; but that God has again spoken to his children on the earth.

C. Hunt gave a violin solo, accompanied by Sister Nellie Hanson.

President Smith related some conversations with prominent men of the United States, in which he had shown them our doctrines, always winning their approval when they understood.

President Stallings, in conclusion, said he rejoiced in being with the people of this country.

Benediction, Samuel Betteridge.

THE SPIRIT OF SONG.

"COME, come, ye Saints," and "Let us gather up the sunbeams," for, "If there's sunshine in your heart," you'll find, "The world is full of beauty when the heart is full of love;" therefore, "Let us all be good and kind," whether "In our lovely Deseret," "On foreign land or distant sea."

"Should you feel inclined to censure?" "Nay, speak no ill," but "School thy feelings," and you'll find "There is power in the cool collected mind;" and thus you'll be led to "Count your many blessings" that you have received "Down by the river's verdant side," "High on the mountain tops," or in "The valley's wide."

"Now let us rejoice" that "We're not ashamed to know our Lord," for "He died that we might live," and "O'er the gloomy hills of darkness," "We're guided by his word." "O how lovely was the morning!" "When first the light of truth" was revealed; and "What was witnessed in the heavens?" "An angel from on high;" thus "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet." "Guide us, O thou Great Jehovah," for "The Lord is my light," speaking "Beautiful words of love," that help us to "Do what is right." "The time is far spent," but "Ere we hence depart," I must say "Onward, Christian soldiers," "Put your shoulder to the wheel," for "We are all enlisted," and some are "Waiting for the reapers' sickles;" so, "God be with you till we meet again."—FRANKLIN W. HARRIS, in the *Improvement Era*.

LOVE.

I know sweet Love is a holy thing,
 From a sun-lit sky down-pouring,
 Attuned to the song that the Joy-Birds sing,
 In the airy lightness soaring;
 As a lily white, by a crystal spring,
 I know sweet Love is a holy thing.

I know fair Love is a holy thing
 In the dawn of a sweet forever;
 Like a heavenly song that the angels sing,
 Its glory fadeth never.
 Where the purest hopes of the heart upspring,
 Ah, Love, sweet Love, is a holy thing.

I know dear Love is a holy thing;
 Ye mortals can ye seek it?—
 Deep, deep in the soul doth its rapture spring
 To the lips that fain would speak it;
 Harken, how clear doth the message ring,
 Ah, Love, sweet Love, is a holy thing!

MINNIE IVERSON HODAPP.

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1920.

EDITORIAL:

STORY OF THE "STAR."

EIGHTY years ago to-day the first number of the *Millennial Star* was issued. It was on Wednesday, May 27th, 1840. It was edited by Parley P. Pratt, and issued as a twenty-four page monthly from the publishing office at 149 Oldham Road, Manchester, and from the press of W. R. Thomas, Spring Gardens, where the succeeding numbers were printed until the end of the year. The last four numbers of the first volume, however, were printed by W. Shackleton and Son, Manchester, and the first number (May, 1841) of the second volume was printed by Dalton and Wrigg, No. 61 Spring gardens. After that the numbers bore the imprint: "Printed and published by P. P. Pratt, 47 Oxford Street, Manchester," until 1842, when it was also announced that it was for sale at the Emigration Office, 36 Chapel Street, Liverpool. The publication office was then established at the latter address, and from that time until the present the *Star* has been published in Liverpool. It is the oldest continued publication, having made no material change in its title, character or general make-up, published in Liverpool. The daily newspapers—*The Post and Mercury* and *The Courier*, are the only papers maintaining their identity which ante-date the *Star*, and even they have undergone some radical modifications during the long period of the *Star's* existence. No weekly, semi-monthly, monthly, or other periodical outside of the newspapers published here, have had anything like the length of years and regularly sustained character, which gives the *Millennial Star* this conspicuous pre-eminence in the field of Liverpool literature.

In the celebration of this eightieth anniversary, we have begun in this number, a review of the eighty-one volumes that precede the present—there having been two volumes completed in one year. It must be a cursory review at best that we shall attempt; for the whole matter makes a large library of great diversity, comprising a history of the Church from long before the martyrdom of the Prophet. Within its pages appear tracts and treatises, poems and hymns, sermons and lectures; correspondence from all the missions, and reports of conferences, in which the names of well nigh all the elders of Israel, who have attained distinction in the service of the Lord in this dispensation, are found bearing witness to the restoration of the gospel and the progress of the Church in preparation for the Millennium, the reign of peace—the great Sabbath of Creation. Paraphrasing the words of the first

editor: We are aware of the greatness of the undertaking in conducting such a review; for it is indeed like entering upon "a boundless field—a shoreless ocean—a fathomless deep." in which all that he anticipated has been gloriously realized in the abundance and variety of the contents of this periodical, in the inspiration and high quality of the many writers, whose best literary work adorns its pages.

To mention the names of some, only a few, perhaps; to comment briefly upon matter of greatest interest, as it came forth from period to period is the utmost of our expectation. Even to do that, as Elder Pratt eloquently expressed it when beginning his work, "we are truly sensible of our inability to do justice to subjects so glorious and sublime, to themes so delightful, so divine; themes which have exhausted the eloquence of ancient prophets—the melody of inspired poets: themes, of which angels have tuned their sweetest notes—their sublimest effusions, in strains divinely new, the fulness yet untold."

J. F. W.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS.

IN the death of Mr. Howells, age 83, which occurred in New York on Tuesday, May 11th, 1920, the dean of American contemporary literature has passed from life. He was the last of that great galaxy of brilliant men of letters of the Nineteenth Century, whose names and writings will forever distinguish them as foremost among American authors, in the same way that the notables of the Victorian era are upheld among the British.

Mr. Howells was born in Belmont Co., Ohio, in 1837, and learned the printer's trade in his father's office. He began writing as a news reporter and journalist, and with an occasional poem. He was United States Consul at Venice for four years, 1861-65, and wrote there *Venetian Life*, later revised and republished as one of his earliest, most successful and delightful books. In 1866 he moved to New England, and soon attracted the favor of Mr. J. R. Lowell, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and was engaged as assistant Editor by Mr. Fields his life long friend. He succeeded Lowell, and was Editor of that magazine for about ten years. While on the *Atlantic* he became one of that wonderful literary fraternity, meeting and mingling with Longfellow, Lowell, Hawthorne, Emerson, Holmes, Motley, and Mrs. Alcott. In New York his intimates were Mark Twain, Bryant, Aldrich, Stedman, Alden, Curtis, and, of course, the great newspaper men, Dana, Bennett, and Greeley.

In 1881 he engaged with Harper's, and became editor of "The Study," the literary department of *Harper's Monthly*, and afterwards of "The Easy Chair," in which he continued until his death.

For a time he edited *The Cosmopolitan Magazine*. Many of his novels first appeared as serials in these foremost American magazines; afterwards being issued in book form from their publishers. He must have written nearly a hundred novels, books of travel, plays, mostly farces, criticism, and poems.

Mr. Howells' wit was as keen as Mark Twain's, though less droll, perhaps, and without irreverence or vulgarity. His style and language were the refinement of elegant diction. His plots were dramatic, but not sensational. His portraiture of character was intelligently critical, and wonderfully illuminating in its analysis of thought and feeling. His descriptions of travel unsurpassed.

In 1889 I met Mr. Howells. I was having a book made for the M. I. A. reading course by Harper Brothers. I was in the office with Mr. Abner Harper, the manager, who very politely offered to do anything that would make my stay in New York pleasant. I expressed a preference to meet some of the editors, especially Mr. Howells, supposing they were in the Harper's Building, at Franklin Square. He said, "Why, we never see them! I don't suppose Howells has been here for two months. He travels about, lives in hotels, etc. But I will inquire if he is in the city, or is apt to be, and will let you know." After leaving Mr. Harper I went into the office of Mr. Nast, the corresponding secretary of the firm, and within half an hour Mr. Harper came hurrying in and said, "I'm glad you're still here. The strangest thing happened. You had not left me five minutes and Mr. Howells came into my room. He is there now. I told him all about you and your desire to meet him. He said he was most curious to meet you, so come along."

We returned to Mr. Harper's room, and there stood the renowned author—a rather short, stout, most agreeable looking gentleman. His dome of intellectual forehead, and genial, great, grey eyes, windows of critical intelligence, reminding me of Dr. John R. Park, opened upon me as he allowed me to approach him rather than he coming forward to meet me. He extended a friendly hand that held mine for a moment, as he expressed his pleasure at meeting me. Mr. Harper having used the word "curious," led me at once, after saying how glad I was to see him, to add: "I wonder if it might not be with you, sir, as it was with a gentleman I met in my youth in Venice. He was a tall, handsome, white-haired, elderly man, a New Englander, who in all his travels had never happened to see a live Mormon, and had shown considerable interest when told there was one at the hotel. I was brought forward and presented to him by Lieut. Thomas, of the United States Navy. It was in the open court of the Victoria hotel. This gentleman scanned me quite critically over and over again—up and down, and then asked me if I would again raise my hat, as I had already done once, when introduced to him. It occurred to me that he had heard the story that the Mormons have horns,

and so I said to him: "Oh, you want to see my horns!" His face flushed conviction; but he smiled as I took off my hat and told him that I was a young one and they hadn't sprouted yet.

Mr. Howells appeared immensely pleased with this narrative, and he and Mr. Harper laughed over and over again at it. And then I had half-an-hour's delightful conversation with him. He asked me to call upon him, and to dine, and said he would mail me an appointment, which he did a day or two later.

When I called at his hotel, The Albert, in lower Fifth Avenue, he was waiting for me, and said he had invited a young man to join us, Mr. Henry Harland, whom he said was one of the most promising of the younger American authors. Presently Mr. Harland came, and the three of us set out for Moretti's, in Fourteenth Street, a famous and favorite Italian restaurant, in which we were taken to a private room and were served with a very delicious Italian dinner. We sat down at seven and rose from the table after eleven. They plied me with questions in the most gentle and refined way, and drew out from me an account of the first vision of Joseph Smith the Prophet, to which they listened with amazed if incredulous interest; of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; the organization, rise and progress of the Church, and then—which was the theme they most desired to have expounded—an account of the social life of the Mormons.

At the time of this interview, the prosecutions of the Mormons, under the Anti-polygamy laws were most vigorous. The several enactments of the Congress depriving them of their civil rights, confiscating their church property, and providing severe penalties of fines and imprisonment for violation of the social statutes, were before the people and constituted the leading theme of press and pulpit all over the land. Mr. Howells was a social philosopher, without religious creed or prejudice, and he viewed the action of the government, in passing and enforcing laws against what he called "the Mormon social experiment," with horror. He said, in effect: "Why, it's the last thing in the world that Congress should interfere with. It's the most interesting experiment the world has ever seen. The government should rather aid than hinder its development. Mormonism is practical Christianity, with this patriarchal institution of marriage added on. It presents, and apparently will demonstrate that it possesses a solution of the two social evils of our civilization which we are unable to successfully cope with. For to our discredit, in spite of all our learning, our wealth, our religion, which is a profession of Christianity, but not the religion of Christ—the Mormons come nearer to having that than any others, for it is an everyday matter with them—I say it with shame—in spite of all that we call civilization, we have the burden upon our shoulders and conscience of the prostitution of our womenkind, and the destitution of our poor. The Mormon system presents a solution of these problems. I

do not say it is *the* solution for our people or for the world, but it is *a* solution. The Mormons should be let alone to work out their theories, and the government ought rather to help than hurt their people while they are doing it."

I corresponded occasionally with Mr. Howells for several years; sent him the Mormon literature, and had the pleasure of meeting him a number of times in New York and Boston. He always treated me with respectful courtesy and kindness. He recommended me to read Tolstoy, whose "American apostle" he was sometimes called. I have wondered if it might not be that the great Russian author came by his knowledge of the Mormons, through the matter sent first to Mr. Howells, and which, in the discussion of social themes between them, could very well have served its purpose. Tolstoy knew enough of Mormonism to say to the American minister, Andrew D. White, that so far as he had investigated the system, one third was Scriptural, one third was superstition, and the other third he could not decide: "Perhaps it is the truth!" Did he get that view through Mr. Howells? I have often wondered.

J. F. W.

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM.

A STUDY BY A. A. RAMSEYER.

V.

ABRAHAM AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

Chronologically speaking, Abraham was living at our antipodes, going to Egypt about 1920 years before Christ; but as the chronology, counting from our time backward, is rather uncertain, let us reckon it from the creation instead, which will answer our purpose just as well, to establish Abraham's position among his contemporaries. We will use the dates given in the Lectures on Faith in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.

The flood came in the 1656th year of the world; supposing Abraham to have been born when Terah was one hundred and thirty years old, it was 352 years from the flood to the birth of Abraham; but if he was born when Terah was seventy years old, it was 292 years (Lecture 2: 47). "It appears from this account that Nahor, brother of Abraham, Terah, Nahor, Serug, Reu, Peleg, Eber, Salah, Arphaxad, Shem, and Noah, all lived on the earth at the same time; and that Abraham was 18 years old when Reu died, 41, when Serug and his brother Nahor died, 75, when Terah died, 88, when Arphaxad died, 118, when Salah died, 150, when Shem died, and that Eber lived four years after Abraham's death. And that Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Reu, Serug, Terah, and Nahor, the brother of Abraham, lived at the same time, and that Nahor, the brother of Abraham, Terah, Serug,

Ren, Eber, Salah, Arphaxad, and Shem, were all acquainted with both Noah and Abraham" (Lect. 2: 52). In other words, from the time of the flood to the birth of Abraham, there was a period about as long as from the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers to our own time. The building of the tower of Babel and the subsequent confusion of tongues happened within that comparatively short time and were still recent events in the memory of those ancient worthies. The Chaldeans and the Egyptians were but young nations in those days; at least they could not claim a hoary antiquity. If Abraham were not born until his father Terah was 130 years old, then Noah had died but two years before Abraham's birth; but if Abraham were born when Terah was 70 years old, then Abraham must have been acquainted with Noah for at least 58 years; at any rate he must have been acquainted with Shem, the brother of Ham, from whom the Egyptians descended; so that when Abraham was called of God to be a minister to bear His name abroad, he was to travel among his cousins, the children of Ham and possibly of Japhet. The fathers of those nations were still living in his days, at least Shem was.

SOME OF ABRAHAM'S THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

To Abraham belongs the distinction of revealing some very striking ideas, not generally known among religionists, except Latter-day Saints. I refer to the pre-existence of spirits, called by him Intelligences: "Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; and God saw the souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make My rulers; for He stood among these that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born" (Ch. 3: 22, 23). This passage elucidates the mysterious saying of Jeremiah: "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Along with this new doctrine is that of a "first estate," a necessary corollary of the passages quoted above: "And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads forever and ever" (3: 26). The primeval existence here mentioned is our previous spirit life; we are now in our second estate or life, of which the Lord said: "and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them."

Abraham uses an uncommon expression in his account of the Creation, but one which is in strict accord with the Hebrew original in Genesis, chapter 1 and, as far as and inclusive of, verse 2 of chapter 2, where the expression "God" as rendered in the Christian Bibles of all languages, in Hebrew reads "Elohim," viz., "the Gods." In the balance of chapter 2, and in the whole of chapter 3 of Genesis, instead of "God" we have the expression "the Lord God," in Hebrew "Jehovah Elohim." The term "the Gods" is used by Abraham through all his narration, which comprises chapters 4 and 5. It is but the logical consequence of what precedes his account of the Creation, which is thus introduced: "And there stood one among them (the intelligences) that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell." Hence the plural, both in the pronoun and in the noun.

There is still another important principle enunciated in the Book of Abraham, one that cannot fail to attract the attention of deep thinkers and philosophers. In his account of the Creation, Abraham uses the following language: "And the Gods ordered, saying, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the earth come up dry; and it was so as they ordered; and the gods pronounced the dry land earth; and the gathering together of the waters pronounced they great waters; and the Gods saw that they were obeyed" (Chap. 4: 9, 10).

What! Intelligent matter! The elements obeyed! Yea, the earth, the herbs and the trees, the waters and their teeming myriads, heaven's expanse and its winged creatures, all obeyed the command of the Gods, for we are informed that "the Gods watched those things which they had ordered *until they obeyed*" (Chap. 4: 18).

ABRAHAM'S LIFE'S PURPOSE.

If we were asked individually what each of us would like to be in life's drama, what niche we would like to occupy in this world's history, what would our wishes be? Would we like to be a conqueror like Cæsar, an orator like Demosthenes, a musician like Mozart, or an inventor like Edison? Did we not, to a certain degree, have our choice in that first estate of which Abraham speaks? Did not Jesus and Lucifer both present themselves as candidates to carry out the plan of salvation, each with a different method? Were we not assigned different tasks, different missions for this second estate? Were not, from our youth up, our hearts and minds filled with the desire to shine in a certain capacity, our energies bent to succeed along a particular line? Is not this due to our primeval training and to a deep impression made upon our consciousness or intelligence when we were in the Father's presence? Be that as it may, we all have our ideals, our am-

bitions, and if we steel our wills, we generally succeed in obtaining that for which we started, provided we pay the price for it.

In the opening paragraphs of his writings, Abraham tells us what his ambition was, what he earnestly desired to become in this world:

1. "In the land of the Chaldeans, at the residence of my father, I, Abraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of residence;

2. "And finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers."

A most noble character! To obtain great knowledge, to become a follower of righteousness, to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace! A possessor of the heavenly science of astronomy! A leader among men! The Father of the Faithful! The father of the teeming millions of Arabs, Jews, and American Indians, not omitting the hundreds of thousands of descendants of Ephraim now being gathered; the ten tribes which are shortly to be brought from their place of concealment, to say nothing of the unnumbered descendants of Keturah in Asia. As a teacher and a preacher, he was celebrated in times past. A prince he was in dealing with princes and kings. He was called "the Friend of God," and God names Himself "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." His ambition was most worthy, his career noble, and his name remains as that of a prince among men. Modern revelation has enlightened us concerning his glorious present estate: "He abode in my law, as Isaac also, and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded, and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises and sit upon thrones, and are not angels, but are Gods" (Doctrine and Covenants Sec. 132: 37). "For behold, said the Lord to Moses, this is my work, and my glory,—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Book of Moses, 1: 39).

CONCLUSION.

Thus far, Abraham only has been considered; but what of Joseph Smith, the translator, of this wonderful record? Here is a young man less than forty years old, who without a college education, without books on Egyptology, without any tutor, except the Divine Spirit, not only translates an Egyptian record,

but is also "engaged in translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham, and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian language as practiced by the ancients." As a translator he certainly made good.

Since we do not possess the original manuscript from which the Book of Abraham was translated, it is not possible for admirer or for critic to say anything about it; and the translation must speak for itself. To any fair-minded reader, this record is very striking, and at once takes a very eminent place among the sacred Christian scriptures, on account of its lofty philosophical and theological teachings: it unfolds a plan of Creation, compassing not only the present but the past and the future of the intelligences which dwelt with God; it gives us a glimpse of a far grander system of astronomy than the best of modern astronomers has ever made known.

The three illustrations or cuts accompanying the translation have been shown to be strictly Egyptian, according to our present stage of knowledge of Egyptology, and this by analyzing them by means of Prof. Budge's book on the Egyptian language, as well as the books of other competent Egyptologists. What if these illustrations are examined in fifty or one hundred years from now, when greater discoveries shall have been made? Latter-day Saints may rest assured that the Book of Abraham is a perfectly authentic record, notwithstanding critics who egregiously disagree among themselves.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD.

Mother's Day.—Sunday, May 9th, 1920, Mother's Day under the direction of Sunday-school Superintendent Frederick Oates was observed in the Sunderland branch. A special program was given by the children, and Mary France, one of the children, presented each mother present with a white flower. Sister March was in charge, and Elder Higgins gave a short talk on "Mother."

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